Washington Works Facility; Parkersburg, West Virginia
DuPont / Chemours

Background

Starting in the early 1950s, DuPont had manufactured Teflon at its Washington Works facility outside Parkersburg, West Virginia. The compound PFOA was used in the production process. It was later determined that PFOA was discharged into the air, surface water and ground water in the area. Since 2002, EPA Regions 3 & 5 and the EPA Office of Water have issued a series of SDWA Orders to DuPont and its spinoff company Chemours who now operates at the facility. Under the Orders, DuPont and Chemours have been required to test for the presence of PFOA in public and private drinking water supplies in designated areas of West Virginia and Ohio, and to provide alternate water or treatment when levels exceed the "site-specific action level" of 70 ppt.

Current Status

EPA Regions 3 & 5 continue to review well monitoring data generated by DuPont/Chemours and when necessary, require the companies to expand the monitoring into new geographic areas that may have endangering levels of PFOA. As before, any water supply exceeding 70 ppt is provided alternate water and/or treatment.

GenX

Based on information provided by DuPont and Chemours, the use of PFOA at the Washington Works facility was discontinued in 2013. The compound GenX (C3 Dimer acid) has since been used in the Teflon manufacturing process. Although the toxicity of GenX is not fully understood, EPA had concerns that it may be entering the surface water and ground water in a similar manner as did its predecessor PFOA. In a January 11, 2018 letter, EPA requested Chemours to test for GenX in four public water supplies and ten private water supplies (West Virginia and Ohio). Results indicate the presence of GenX in the raw (untreated) water in 9 of 14 water supplies sampled. GenX concentrations ranged from non-detect to 81 ppt. GAC filtration which is in place at all of the water supplies reduced GenX in the treated water to non-detect. EPA has requested, and Chemours has agreed to continue the quarterly GenX monitoring on an expanded number (23) of public and private water supplies in order to better characterize the extent of the ground water contamination.